

# MONTANA STATE SENATE



SENATOR STEVE BENEDICT

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20 November 1997

Mr. Steve Kelly  
Supervisor  
Bitterroot National Forest  
1801 N. First St.  
Hamilton, MT 59840

RECEIVED BY U.S. FISH  
AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
GRIZZLY BEAR RECOVERY  
COORDINATORS OFFICE.

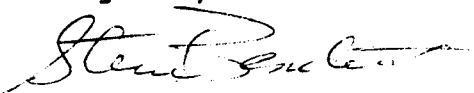
Dear Supervisor Kelly,

I am writing to express my support for your thoughtful position on reintroduction of Grizzly Bears into the Bitterroot-Selway Wilderness Area. I have been closely following the arguments on both sides of this issue, and I agree with you that there are too many negatives for residents of the Bitterroot Valley and the bears themselves.

1 It seems that the folks who are pushing the recovery agenda are not interested in the factual evidence of poor habitat and bear-human conflicts, and are focussed only on winning the philosophical arguments, at the expense of the bear. That is not fair to the bear or to local residents. In my position as a state senator, I have been in touch with many of my constituents and I am convinced that they are overwhelmingly against reintroduction for a variety of reasons.

Please feel free to share this letter with any person or agency that you feel is appropriate. Thank you for your obvious concern for the Grizzly Bear and for the residents of the Bitterroot Valley.

Best regards,

  
Steve Benedict  
Montana Senate  
District 30